Uganda Shuts Down Social Media for Interfering in Their Elections

tonyodarg.wordpress.com/2021/01/12/uganda-bans-social-media

Tony Odarg January 12, 2021

President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda has decided to shut down all social media in their country, due to various election accounts being banned.

> Uganda shut down all social media in the country Tuesday after the country's longtime leader accused Facebook of taking sides in the upcoming presidential election on Thursday. "If you want to take sides against the (ruling party), then that group will not operate in Uganda," he said in a national address.

Twitter responded, with some brilliant pretzel logic.

> Ahead of the Ugandan election, we're hearing reports that Internet service providers are being ordered to block social media and messaging apps. We strongly condemn internet shutdowns – they are hugely harmful, violate basic human rights and the principles of the #OpenInternet. Earlier this week, in close coordination with our peers, we suspended a number of accounts targeting the election in Uganda. If we can attribute any of this activity to state-backed actors, we will disclose to our archive of information operations: Access to information and freedom of expression, including the public conversation on Twitter, is never more important than during democratic processes, particularly elections.

So when social media interferes in elections in Uganda and they get shut down, it's a question of human rights, but when the leader of the free world gets kicked off twitter, that's in defense of democracy? That's some bald faced hypocrisy if I ever did see it.

> The backstory is that Twitter and other tech giants tried to interfere in the Ugandan election by mass-banning certain accounts. So Uganda took the entirely appropriate step of leveling the playing field by banning Twitter altogether. The U.S. should have done the same in 2020.

Exactly. Or simply declared social media companies public utilities like the water or phone companies that you only lose access to with a court order.

> GOP won in 2016 and had unified control of Congress. They'll end up having done less to protect the ability of their followers to speak than the government of Uganda.

And that is the problem with Republicans: they can't see any issue of power properly, because they are religiously wedded to "government be bad". Twitter can't have it both ways, they want to interfere in elections without any consequences. The Ugandan government has said that if social media companies don't stop interfering in elections in the future, they will make the ban permanent. And in a way I hope they don't lift the ban. The internet is where thinking went to die, time to bury the corpse.

Links

Twitter lol thread: https://twitter.com/Policy/status/1349059275461685250
Archive: https://archive.vn/zV6FJ

Backstory: https://twitter.com/LibertarianBlue/status/1349076571613753346
Archive: https://archive.vn/D6KIv

GOP: https://twitter.com/RichardHanania/status/1349093398750220288
Archive: https://archive.vn/w8gDf

Twitter condemnation: https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/twitter-slam-uganda-censor-election
Archive: https://archive.vn/mzaIG

Uganda summary: https://nypost.com/2021/01/12/uganda-bans-all-social-media-ahead-of-election/
Archive: https://archive.vn/JltHd

Human rights: https://humanevents.com/2021/01/12/twitter-responds-to-ugandas-social-media-shutdown-we-strongly-condemn-internet-shutdowns-amid-platform-wide-conservative-purge/
Archive: https://archive.vn/qq5G6

Permanent threat: https://nationalfile.com/uganda-blocks-facebook-twitter-threatens-to-make-ban-permanent-if-theyre-not-friendly-and-equitable-to-ugandans/
Archive: https://archive.vn/91s7g

Gov statement: https://twitter.com/GovUganda/status/1349060384490213377
Archive: https://archive.vn/Qy9UD